



1260 Maryland Avenue, Suite 103 • Hagerstown, Maryland 21740
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**Western Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council Meeting
Quarterly RC&D and Council Meeting Minutes
December 10, 2015**

Council President Craig Hartsock called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. at the Western Maryland Research and Education Center, in Keedysville, MD. In attendance was Craig Hartsock (Allegany SCD), Roger Troxell (Frederick Soil Conservation District) Ed Null (Carroll SCD), Jeff Barkley (Allegany County), Willie Lantz, Paul Shogren (Garrett County), Stacey Kahler, Gary Aronhalt, Laura Michael, Mark and Ethan Goldbach (WMRC&D).

Guests included Dr. Terron Hillsman, State Conservationist, USDA, NRCS Maryland, and Paul Petzrick, MDNR Power Plant Research Program.

Council President, Craig Hartsock welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance and recognized guests attending the meeting.

Ed Null presented the Treasurer's Report financial status to the Council and meeting attendees.

Dr. Hillsman presented an update of USDA, NRCS Maryland activities including, locally lead conservation and RC&D relationship and related success. Dr. Hillsman discussed his priorities for the People, Partnerships and Planning Program initiative ongoing in Maryland, the annual State Resource Assessment initiative, and core partners (including WMRC&D) who are essential to carry out the NRCS mission. The NRCS competitive and non-competitive budget components were explained.

Doctor Hillsman described the present challenges of the NRCS's "Locally Led Conservation" initiative including less public awareness of agriculture and conservation, program-driven conservation implementation, less time and resources for technical assistance, increased regulation and new partners. The present habitat restoration successes of the WMRC&D and NRCS partnership included 24 Wetlands Restoration Program (WRP) projects, 5,700 acres of acres protected and 2,500 acres restored. Lastly, additional partnership opportunities within the "Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and associated funding was explained.

Note: A copy of Dr. Hillsman's power point presentation was sent to WMRC&D for distribution to WMRC&D Council members. This was be printed off and distributed to Council members.

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Council President Craig Hartsock awarded the G. Paul Edwards/Western Maryland Conservation Award for 2015 to long-time Council member Paul Shogren. Craig noted Paul's many volunteer and conservation related accomplishments including his work on the WMRC&D Council, Washington Elm Tree Project, and service as a Boy Scout Troop Leader. Paul was presented with a framed certificate from the Council and framed tree print purchased from the Oakland Art Council Gallery.

The previously scheduled conference call with Olga Walter and Andy Gordon from the National Association of RC&D's was cancelled because the facility's conference call phone was inoperable. Arrangements will be made with Olga to reschedule this presentation for the March 2016 Quarterly Council meeting.

Craig adjourned the meeting at 11:45 AM for lunch.

Craig reconvened the meeting at 1:00 PM and then opened up the council meeting for staff reports.

Laura Michael gave a power point presentation on her 10 years of project work for the WMRC&D and associated project work for the PPRP. Laura serving as the Environmental Research Coordinator conducts a wide variety of research and report writing services for PPRP. Laura presented her work on many projects including finding beneficial uses for coal combustion by-products (CCB's), the Maryland Mine Sealing Program, assistance to Environmental Resource Management, Geophysical Resistivity Surveys (underground mine void location and detection) the Jennings's Run Limestone Leach Bed project and stream loss studies. Laura is working on completing reports on projects for PPRP. Laura noted that unfortunately, the Georges Creek Watershed Association may be ending.

Gary Aronhalt gave a power point presentation on his progress related to the grant that is funding his position with MDNR Forest Service. Gary explained in detail his JRL tree planting project including site preparation, planting, tree species planted and construction of a deer fence to protect the trees planted.

Willie Lantz provided an update on the Frostburg Grows Project. Willie detailed that the completion of CBT Grant for the rain water collection system was nearing completion. Many volunteers were involved with this project. The Town Creek Grant food mapping project is underway. A Food Council is being formed for Allegany, Garrett and Washington County. Willies explained that Joe Hoffman's position with the County Extension has been extended for one year.

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Council Member Business Meeting:

At 1:15 PM, Craig Hartsock called the roll of voting members and determined a quorum was present in order to conduct council business. The following Council Members were present;

Craig Hartsock
Roger Troxell
Ed Null
Jeff Barclay
Willie Lantz
Paul Shogren

Minutes from the September 17th, 2015 Quarterly Council Meeting were approved without any changes.

Old Business:

The 2016 Operating Budget for WMRC&D was distributed to Council members for review. The Operating Budget was passed unanimously by the Council.

A discussion regarding reinstating the Soil Conservation District Annual membership dues to WMRC&D followed. A motion to reinstate these dues was passed unanimously by the Council.

As part of the Annual Operating Budget, consideration for developing a public display unit was discussed. This item was tabled for future discussion.

New Business:

President Hartsock made a motion to pay the National Association of RC&D Council's 2016 membership dues. A discussion followed. The Council passed President Hartsock's motion with one dissenting vote from Council Member Paul Shogren. The invoice from the NARC&D Councils will be paid.

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The donation for the 2016 National Envirothon for \$250.00 was discussed. It was decided to table any action on this until the March meeting, at which time Craig will present sponsorship opportunities for the WMRC&D Council's consideration.

Council member Willie Lantz made a motion for the WMRC&D to support the “Appalachia Grows, Small Farms Conference” again in 2016 with a \$250.00 donation. This motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Paul Shogren requested that our next Council meeting include an agenda item to invite Jonathan Kays to discuss our help with implementing the “Call Before You Cut” forestry program. It was agreed that we would do this.

The next scheduled Executive Council Meeting will be held on Thursday, February 18th, 2016 at the WMRC&D Office in Hagerstown.

The next Council Quarterly Meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 16th, 2016 at Allegany College of Maryland in Cumberland, MD.

There being no further business, President Hartsock adjourned the council business meeting at approximately 2:00 P.M.